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THE

Commonweal

The Crusaders

by Tacitulus

Marcel Jouhandeau

by Martin Turnell

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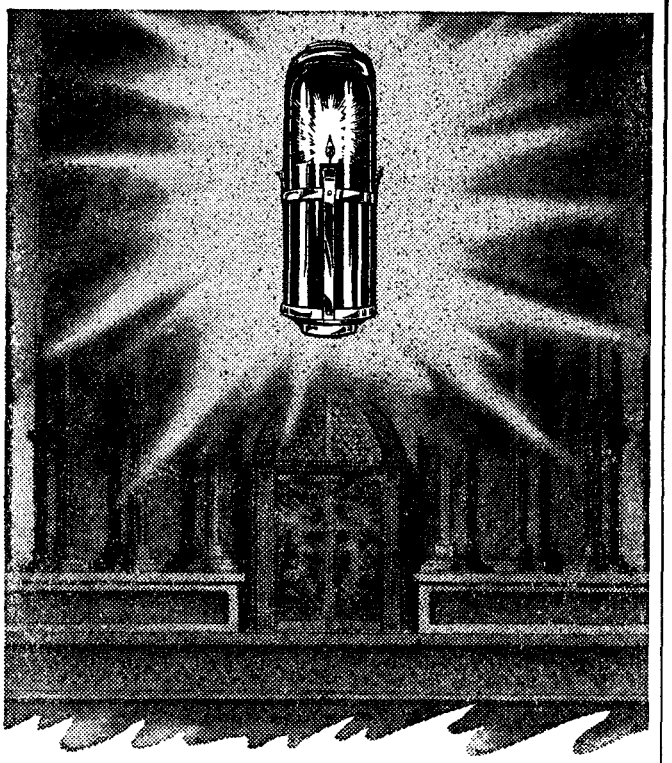

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THE Commonweal

week by week

PANIC IN A HOT CLIMATE

THE word which fits the emotional peaks of the recent history of the war in Indochina is desperation. It was desperation which characterized the last attempts to save Dienbienphu; the men who parachuted into that fortress in the last two weeks were taking, and losing, a gamble so desperate that it really could not be called a gamble: there were no odds.

The odds are little better today as General Paul Ely takes command in Indochina. Within a week of his arrival the Communists will be in a position to attack the Hanoi-Haipong delta with decisive power.

And in Geneva the French negotiators are speculating on a desperate margin, for by the time this editorial is published the French Government may have fallen. The Communists can thus expect easy alternatives: to be given their way in Indochina by a new Paris cabinet dedicated to peace at any price, or to win their way in Indochina by arms with a short, strong offensive against Hanoi and Haipong.

The note of desperation is not confined to Paris and Hanoi. Admiral Robert Carney, Chief of U.S. Naval Operations, said on May 27 that every Communist victory in Southeast Asia—or elsewhere—measurably decreases the strength of the Western alliance. "It would be a willfully blind man indeed who failed to see and admit that the danger is imminent and is increasing swiftly." Admiral Carney did no more than appraise the military balance between East and West. But what he said was taken by many to mean that the situation could only be saved by a decisive act now, while the balance favors the West.

Throughout Washington there appears to be general agreement that American intervention in Indochina, if that were to come, could only be on an unlimited basis—that only if we could bomb the Chinese mainland, if the Chinese came in, and use atomic weapons, could we intervene without hopelessly dissipating our strength.

Both of these arguments would be tenable if military affairs were as isolated and logical as mathematics. They would make sense in a laboratory if only the world were a laboratory. Since the problem is not splendidly and singly military, both plans must be rejected.

The principal danger we face is that the next crisis in Indochina is going to strike the American public with the suddenness of the Dienbienphu crisis. We may, in a few weeks, find that the French are fighting a Dunkirk on the quays of Haipong. Or we may find Premier Laniel deposed, Foreign Minister Bidault repudiated, and a cabinet in Paris which wishes to liquidate the war at any cost.

THEN will we once again noisily deflate, and tell one another that Indochina really wasn't important? And then start marking off the days until a 'free and independent native liberation movement' armed with field pieces and multiple rocket launchers makes its spontaneous appearance in Burma or Thailand—and The Tragedy of Southeast Asia begins its second performance?

Or will our reaction be one of desperation? To use an expressive Army phrase, will someone push the panic button? And then will our haste force us to fall back on military mathematics, and fire off the A-bomb?

There are military discussions going on now in Washington between France, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. (With really remarkable obtuseness, the Philippines and Thailand, the two Asian nations who have indicated an interest in a defense pact, were ostentatiously excluded.) One hopes that these officers are able to produce a serious, viable plan for defending Southeast Asia. But they are concerned primarily with what happens *after* Geneva. The problem of Hanoi and Haipong remains. And the Administration has not seen fit to discuss the course of events in Indochina with the American public; it has not seen fit to prepare the public for the sacrifices which may be demanded of it; it apparently has not yet been able to force itself to decide between military

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strength and tax reductions. It looks very much as though we are still relying on the somewhat tarnished magic of massive retaliatory power, which, if invoked in Indochina, would cause us to lose irrevocably the sympathies of all Asia.

Lacking the firm support of the British, lacking a stable French Government (although Premier Laniel has tried magnificently), there is perhaps nothing we can do to save Northern Indochina from the Communists. But one hopes that the decision is being made soberly. To lose Indochina would be a disaster. To become involved in the war would be a disaster. Which is the lesser is the awful calculation. There is just one thing which would be worse than either of those: for the United States to invent its Indochina policy in a panic of headlines.

OBJECTIVE: PRIVATE POWER

IN the course of the Presidential campaign Mr. Eisenhower was reported to have referred to the world-famed Tennessee Valley Authority as "creeping socialism." Despite sporadic protests from the area and elsewhere, he has given little evidence of having changed his mind. He recently allowed Chairman Gordon Clapp's term of office to expire, and the man to leave, without so much as the courtesy of a letter of appreciation. Only when pressed at a news conference did the President say a word for Mr. Clapp in terms of services conscientiously rendered. Mr. Eisenhower is definitely anti-TVA.

It comes, therefore, as somewhat of a surprise to have Admiral Ben Moreell, who has been leading a "task force" through the South and Far West to conduct hearings on private and public electric power, declare that his group would not be bound by any Presidential campaign pledges. (It seems that Mr. Eisenhower had once said something about keeping TVA going at maximum efficiency.) What is hardly surprising is that this "task force" has been a target for criticism for its lack of impartiality.

NEXT WEEK

The Commonweal will publish Joseph E. Imbriaco's prize-winning essay on the Catholic in the democratic society, an excerpt from which follows:

"The source of much apparent tension between the Catholic in the Church and in the democratic society lies precisely in this point: that while in the social life of the Church, the Catholic is committed to a body of fairly-well defined doctrine, the same person lives in a civil society in which there is no consensus on explanations of reality—and none is insisted upon. Men differ in the theoretical explanations of social and metaphysical realities. What they must agree on, however, are the basic practical principles of action. In other words, the democratic society does not presuppose uniformity in doctrine or ideology. It is rather a complex of socio-political processes — ways of doing things — through which the individual can realize freedom, justice and temporal well-being for himself, and through which the social body can achieve the good common to all."

MCCARTHYISM AGAINST McCARTHY

A FEW years ago there was a man in the U.S. Senate named Theodore Bilbo. Bilbo, a Negro-baiting, Catholic-baiting, Jew-baiting fixture used to get headlines now and then when his statements were particularly outrageous. Once, toward the end of his career, he wrote a letter to one of his critics which began "Dear Dago" and then carried on in the same charming spirit to the bitter end. There was a little public furore about that. The *New Yorker* magazine, in its comment, suggested that the word 'bilbo' be incorporated into the language to immortalize the Senator. That, the *New Yorker* felt, would be a punishment to fit the crime for a man who substituted mindless vituperation for argument.

The suggestion did not take. Actually the first Washington politico to be so immortalized is the present junior senator from Wisconsin. The word 'McCarthyism' (or mccarthyism, as it is sometimes spelled) alone has gained a place in our language. There are claims that the word itself was first coined by the *Daily Worker*. They may or may not be true. In any case the word would have died overnight if the actions of the Senator himself during the past three years had not contributed so much toward giving it precise definition.

Now Senator McCarthy did not singlehandedly invent mccarthyism. His contribution was limited to giving the concept its richest illustration to date. Mccarthyism can strike anywhere; it is even quite possible to find it on the anti-McCarthy front. When, for instance, anti-McCarthy partisans blast whole religious or national segments of society and tar them with the brush meant for the Senator and his lackeys, they are, we submit, engaging in mccarthyism. When they spread unfounded rumors about the Senator and his staff, they play the mccarthy game. When they systematically use innuendo to say what they cannot repeat under oath or even repeat forthrightly without oath; when they make hazy general charges which cannot be substantiated; when they attempt to score for their side in the present Wash-

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ington hearings by arbitrarily associating McCarthy with unsavory (but never established) connections; when they make sly appeals to racial or religious feelings: when these tactics are used—even against the Senator—there is a word to describe them. (Perhaps the Senator's most lasting contribution will be the one he has made to the dictionary.)

Senator Ralph Flanders' recent speech about the Junior Senator, we submit, was a timid exploration into the mccarthyist wilderness. The Vermont Senator hinted darkly that there was some sinister personal bondage between McCarthy and the Messrs. Cohn and Schine. The Junior Senator then, quite properly, invited Flanders to specify under oath whatever it was he was hinting around about. Flanders had no answer except to say that all he knew was what he read in the newspapers.

Again, the Vermonter attempted to turn McCarthy into a special foe of the nation's Jews and Protestants, on the flimsiest evidence. The Jews: McCarthy's anti-Communism parallels Adolf Hitler's, ergo McCarthy must share Hitler's racist attitudes (despite his relationship with Cohn and Schine); the Protestants: McCarthy had no word of rebuke for (Protestant) J. B. Matthews' charges against a small minority of the Protestant clergy, ergo he must be anti-Protestant. The Wisconsin Senator, Flanders said, after contrasting the treatment McCarthy received at the hands of Cardinal Spellman of New York and Bishop Sheil of Chicago, had even "driven his blundering axe deep in the heart of his own church." What Flanders apparently meant was that Catholics, like Protestants and Jews, are divided on the McCarthy issue. (If there were no such division, the charge would then be made that Catholics were a dangerously monolithic bloc.)

It should be pointed out to the Vermont Senator that Catholic unity is not based on agreement with any political figure. Politicians do not forge that unity, nor does political disagreement undo it. We do not believe that the faith of our Protestant and Jewish brethren demands any such unity, either.

Americans, as Americans, are divided on the McCarthy question. Some honestly believe that he is a great national asset; others, like the editors of this magazine, are convinced that he is a dangerous demagogue. But except among the most fanatical, a sense of unity and abiding loyalty to each other as fellow-Americans transcends any such disagreement.

It will be remembered that this was Senator Flanders' second blast at McCarthy. A few days after the first one, the Vermont Republican stated that he was willing to forgive all if only Joe would spend more time on his "twenty years of treason" theme. But Joe has added another year—an Eisenhower year—to that fateful Democratic twenty, and Flanders struck that again. We think this second attempt was inept, to say the least, and bound to failure. Anyone who tries to out-mccarthy McCarthy is up against the Master himself and needs considerably more cunning than Mr. Flanders with his own blundering axe has so far revealed.

INTERRACIAL COUNCILS

IF education is a slow process, whatever is achieved by its means tends to endure and to go on developing. Father John LaFarge, S.J., George K. Hunton and the other founders of the Catholic Interracial Council movement in the United States happily decided at the outset to concentrate on an educational program. Today, after two decades of devotion to the task of bringing Catholic social principles to bear on race relations, there are many accomplishments to chalk up.

On Pentecost Sunday, the twentieth anniversary, the founders could point to the twenty-four councils they had established in various American cities, North and South, the movement's monthly journal, the *Interracial Review*, the contacts that have been established and maintained with Negro leaders and the headway that has been made against racial prejudice and bad feeling, job and school discrimination, restrictive covenants and all manner of segregation. They could rejoice in the unanimous Supreme Court decision against segregated schools, to which their activities have contributed and which the *Interracial Review* declares to be "a compelling challenge to all Americans to accelerate our efforts to hasten the day when it can be truthfully said that the functioning of our democracy will exemplify and insure the equality of all men before the law."

Down through the years the Interracial Councils have provided a sort of object lesson in patient yet determined striving toward a difficult goal. Local meeting rooms were established to bring together participants from both races; many conferences and seminars were held; libraries were built up to supply information to interested patrons and for authors of articles, books and pamphlets. A bureau was organized to send out on demand speakers on racial justice at parish and other meetings; local councils exerted quiet but firm pressure for job and educational opportunities for qualified Negroes; an impressive number of Catholic colleges and universities were persuaded annually to observe Interracial Justice Week. The movement has given abundant witness year after year to Christian teaching on the essential unity of all men and the inviolable dignity of the human person.

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DR. OPPENHEIMER AND THE H-BOMB

CONSIDERABLE adverse comment has already appeared in the press on the Oppenheimer decision. To us, one of the most disturbing aspects of the case was that arising out of Dr. Oppenheimer's attitude on the development of the H-bomb. From the findings, it appears that the physicist not only had his doubts about the technical feasibility of the H-bomb but also displayed moral scruples about its development and a general lack of conviction about the political wisdom of the entire H-bomb program.

Here we think the board is on very dangerous ground. If *ex post facto* evaluations like this are to be used, based on the amount of positive enthusiasm shown for devices like the H-bomb, the country must be full of security risks. Concern over the moral aspects of the H-bomb does not strike us as in the slightest degree absurd, then or now, and we do not think the problem of the personal moral responsibility of the individual scientist can be solved simply by government *fiat*. If Dr. Oppenheimer had his worries about the morality of the H-bomb, not too much of a search would be required to find professional moralists who shared his worries.

As far as we are concerned, the most positive attitude on the H-bomb that is even tolerable is one which regards it as a necessary evil, forced upon us by circumstances beyond our control. That is as far as we are willing to go. For our part, anyone who displayed a positive enthusiasm for the idea of the H-bomb would himself fall into the category of a special—and very dangerous—kind of security risk.

MEN BEHIND BARS

THE prison riots which recently made the nation's headlines seem to have subsided, and with them most of the public attention to the problems of our prisons. Yet these problems are none the less real, and if the riots have temporarily subsided, it means only that the explosive factors have been pushed below the surface.

For all the present peace and quiet, riots are in the making right now in prisons all over the country. To say this requires none of the prophet's gifts, for the conditions which usually produce prison riots are well enough known, and in many U.S. prisons today they are present in abundance. Given these facts, riots are merely a matter of time.

In federal penitentiaries, the situation is potentially explosive. The prisons are overcrowded, they are also receiving a larger percentage of desperate prisoners, individuals sentenced to long terms for brutal crimes. At the same time the prison staffs are undermanned, and Federal Prison Director J. V. Bennett does not have at his disposal the money really needed if he is to perform his difficult job to the best of his ability. If this is the way things are in federal penitentiaries, the state prisons are in worse shape. In many states serious evils abound, ready to erupt into violence at any time.

To remedy this grim situation, definite steps are possible. More money is indispensable. Prison work must be recognized by legislators as the demanding occupation it is, and those with specialized training in the field utilized to a fuller degree. Politics should stop outside the prison wall, and the practice of awarding prison jobs as political patronage should cease.

As matters now stand in too many prisons, first-offenders and hardened psychopaths are often thrown in together. Segregation of such prisoners is essential. Increased attention also should be paid to the entire question of spare time; nowhere does it breed greater trouble than in prison, and more opportunities for constructive work by prisoners would help immeasurably.

But before any reforms of this nature can be instituted, there has to be a completely new approach by the public to the whole question of men in prison. We do not seem to know if our main purpose is to reform or to punish, or possibly a little of both. Too often, prison practices fall between the two. We do not seem to realize that there is a limit beyond which punishment cannot go without making reform impossible. In some of our prisons present conditions seem calculated only to brutalize the human spirit and to produce among prisoners the desire to strike back at those who shut them up and then forgot about them.

A THIRD OF THE WAY

FOUR months ago, early in its Thirtieth Anniversary Year, The Commonweal embarked on the ambitious project of raising its circulation, by the end of the year, to the general level of the other leading American weekly journals of opinion. It is gratifying to us to be able to report that one-third of the distance toward the required eight thousand new subscriptions has now been accomplished. We are warmly grateful to the hundreds of subscribers whose interest and generosity are responsible for this substantial start. The biggest season for new subscriptions still lies ahead, reaching its climax at Christmastime. Moreover, since some five per cent of our subscribers are the ones who have made the present achievement possible, there is hope that in the ensuing months enough of the other ninety-five per cent will secure, or send in, new subscriptions to assure realization of the Anniversary goal.

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The Crusaders

"A BENEVOLENT AND HALF-BAKED 'INTERNATIONALISM' HAS BECOME A COMPLACENTLY ACCEPTED DOGMA, SHARED BY REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS ALIKE."

TACITULUS

IN our age the primacy of foreign policy towers above all domestic issues. There is practically no great question before this Republic which does not, in one way or another, arise from external conditions. Is there any doubt that our present preoccupation with Communism flows from the awful and dominant geographical position that Russia occupies, since the last war, in Eastern Europe and in the Far East? Hence the global obligations of this Republic; hence the strains that exercise American passions, politics, and pocketbooks. Eliminate, in a mental exercise, the issues that derive from the foreign situation, and not much remains: perhaps not much more than the price of butter.

It is, therefore, a safe prediction, if not already a foregone conclusion, that the kind of public passion which has received the glib and inaccurate name of McCarthyism, and which has hitherto been concentrated on domestic security and politics, will soon formulate its clear expressions and demands in the field of foreign affairs. To a considerable degree, it has already begun to influence the diplomacy of the present Administration. And, because of the very nature of our global obligations, the issues and risks involved here are of the greatest import. They literally involve the future of humanity on this earth.

But one must begin with some analysis of the forces involved here. It is indeed evident, and tacitly acknowledged today in the terminology of those who less than a year ago shied away from such realities in semantic horror, that the words 'conservative,' 'reactionary,' 'Right-wing,' 'backward' are meaningless when applied to McCarthy and his movement, and that 'radical,' 'progressive,' 'populist,' 'super-democratic' are at least equally correct designations. The terms 'isolationist,' 'America-Firster,' 'super-nationalist' are equally inapplicable to the foreign policies advocated by this popular and radical American movement; we face here something new, the recognition of which is of supreme importance, in order to avoid a fatal recurrence of the same mistaken analyses which derided McCarthy's actions as reactionary antics, unlikely to elicit popular support except from the befuddled few and the lunatic fringe.

We are involved in a "cold war" with Russia today, just as in 1940 we were with Germany. Fourteen years ago the German armies, having smashed through France and the Lowlands, arrived at the Atlantic. The very existence of England was endangered. German submarines, issuing from French Atlantic ports, emerged in the South and West Atlantic; and, had Hitler so decided, the German armies could have moved south and established themselves in Dakar. It was evident that the strategic interests and the naval defense of this Republic were directly involved in what was happening on the eastern Atlantic shores. Yet this very issue was seriously questioned by many Americans, who disputed the proposition that Hitler's domination over Europe and Africa would be an ultimate menace to the United States; the force of these questions was impressive enough to prevent an American-German war until the national catastrophe of Pearl Harbor.

There is no totalitarian army in Western Europe today. The Russian outposts stand hundreds of miles east of the Atlantic; the Allied navies are supreme in the Mediterranean. Moreover, Russia is not at war; her rulers have, for some time now, moved towards a less bellicose diplomacy, economy, and propaganda; they participated in conferences and made a few frantic public professions of peaceful intentions. I do not wish to be misunderstood. It is my opinion that the strategic position occupied by the Russian Armies in Central Europe today, just as the strategic position occupied by the German Armies and Navies in the Atlantic in 1940, is already too far advanced to be compatible with the long-range security of this Republic. Acquiescence to the extent of German rule in 1940 as well as acquiescence to the extent of Russian rule in 1954 would, *in the long run,* prove detrimental to American interests. Hence the partial inadequacy of the erstwhile policy of "containment."

But what should interest us is the American reaction to these conditions. In 1940, at a time when German submarines moved around Iceland and off Labrador, "isolationist" opinion openly rankled at what could have been construed as American provocations of Germany—today, when the armed strength of Russia is

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crouching behind barbed wires on Macedonian and Hungarian frontiers, and strung along a relatively thin picket line separating the two Germanies, there is virtually no one who would dare to propose that certain American measures (e.g., alliances offered to a ring of Asiatic states encircling the southern rim of the Soviet Union; insistence upon trade restrictions; subversive radio propaganda beamed not only to the satellites but to the component nationalities of the Russian Empire proper) might be construed as undue provocations of Russia. No one, that is, since the late Senator Taft, whose opposition to some of our European military measures in 1951 rested upon his opinion that these would unnecessarily provoke the Russians.

WE are, today, reasonably acquainted with the failures inherent in our late Unconditional Surrender slogan and in the consequent method of warfare. There are those who at that time muttered and lately have been speaking up with increasing vociferousness, against these grievous policies. But it is peculiar, to say the least, that the most vocal critics of the Unconditional Surrender principle applied against Germany (and I hasten to say that their argument was correct) are also the most vocal advocates of an Unconditional Surrender crusade against Russia.

It is, thus, impossible not to reach the conclusion that we are confronted with two kinds of people, and with a veritable double standard: many of those who dreaded the prospect of an American Crusade against Hitler do not dread the prospects of an American Crusade against Russia.

The political sentiments manifested by the McCarthy movement simply cannot, by any stretch of imagination, be called "isolationist," for national isolation is one thing, and a crusade to impose mass democracy on alien peoples, states, continents, is something very different. Still, our national commentators and critics who —alas, too late!—are beginning to abandon the domestic clichés in calling McCarthy "reactionary," are yet consistent in labeling him and his followers as "isolationists." Here is a tragic and fatal misunderstanding.

Washington's Farewell Address has served as the Holy Writ of American isolationism. His measured words exhorting this nation lest she entangle herself in the affairs and quarrels of Europe have been cited by leading isolationists from the Federalists of the Hartford Convention to Hughes, the elder Lodge, and Borah, a century later; their last faint echoes were heard in 1940-41. These were the words which American "internationalism" wished to forget or obscure, with the argument that what was well in Washington's days was not true in ours. The progress from sailships to rapid destroyers, submarines, and jet aircraft has rendered Washington's words anachronistic and inopportune, it was argued. The history of American foreign affairs can be viewed as a gradual progress from idyllic isolation to profound participation in the affairs of foreign continents and nations, a progress parallel with the progress in the speed of communications, it was held.

It is a fact that this *technical* interpretation, this external appendix to that old and rotting chestnut, the progress theory of history, is in itself incorrect: for the truly isolated period of American history was its middle chapter, from 1815 to 1898, and not its beginning. Throughout the colonial and early Federal period, this country was involved in every world war from William III and Louis XIV to Napoleon. But, more important, this interpretation of Washington's cautious words has also misconstrued his meaning. He warned the nation against foreign and passionate entanglements and called for prudence. He was not making a moral judgment. His words emphatically did not establish the superiority of the American form of government over those of other nations. Indeed, the very strength of the American experiment lay in the fact that, unlike the French Revolution, it did not claim to have a universal, ideological message. Washington simply stated that this Republic should not be misled by political sympathies and passions beyond points where her own real interests were not directly involved. Thus classic American isolationism has always been repelled by the notion that our diplomacy should be guided by ideological sympathies, or that it should strive to graft American democracy onto foreign soils. Hughes, Taft, Lodge, and their many predecessors had drunk deeply from the fountains of European and classical culture; they claimed no moral superiority over European systems and civilizations.

But that benevolent and half-baked "internationalism" which first reached its full development under Wilson has become, today, with many other previously sharply debated questions (e.g. the welfare state) a complacently accepted dogma of American life, shared by Republicans and Democrats alike. Just like old-style political Conservatism, American Isolationism is dead —but we are not the least better off for it.

HERE, again, is the same American version of this Great Western tragedy that Faustus saw as the central theme of the Age of Reason: that of the Sorcerer's Apprentice. From the optimistic pragmatism which made a single cult of the majority principle, and resulted in the half-cocked elevation of democracy to a pseudo-religion, ultimately McCarthy profited; the present, and growing mood for an Unconditional Atomic Crusade grew from the benevolent slogans of a half-baked internationalism. The pernicious slogan that the Voice of the People is the Voice of God is McCarthy's slogan today; and he agrees, with Wilson, that America's task is to make the World Safe for Democracy.

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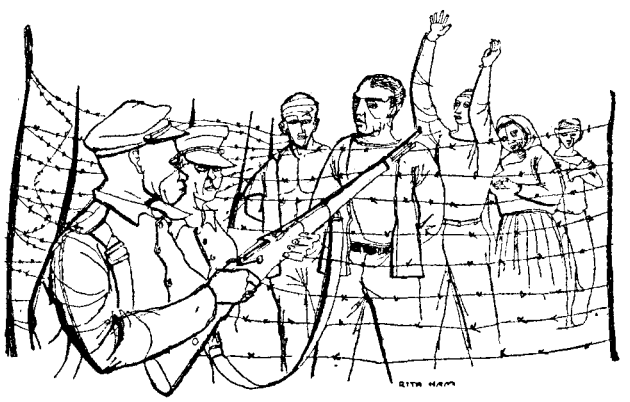
The ultimate bitter fruits of this development are evident today, when our erstwhile optimistic cultists of mass democracy are quaking in their boots before the Voice of the People and before the prospects of government by public-opinion poll that they themselves have helped to raise. They quake, equally, before the prospects of an Atomic Crusade. It is, thus, not a paradoxical but a logical development that in recent months words of Wilson were approvingly quoted by Senator McCarthy and columnists David Lawrence and George Sokolsky; the moderator of the McCarthyite *Facts Forum* radio program recently said that isolation, today, in the Air Age, is an impossibility—the very same argument that our "internationalists" repeated, to the point of hoarseness, in 1940-41. It is part and parcel of a great political revolution wherein the American "conservatives" (and, by and large, the Republican Party), who traditionally aimed to restrict our foreign responsibilities, are now feverishly extending them over the seven seas, to the crest of the Himalayas and to the



shadows of Gobi Deserts, whereas American "liberals" (and, by and large, the Democratic Party) now squirm anxiously, wishing to restrict rather than extend American responsibilities abroad.

Under these circumstances the present debate about the *means* of American foreign policy is truly of third-rate importance. The main, and still much obscured, question is what the *aims* of American foreign policy should be: where do the present frontiers of American security lie? But even the historical debate of this problem has proven vain. For the arguments were placed on the following levels: War propaganda, in 1917 and 1941, claimed that a German attack on America was immediately due, that the Kaiser and Hitler wanted to impose their sauerkraut civilization upon the peoples of this Democracy. But this, of course, was not true. Ten years after 1917 and 1941, respectively, sympathizers with the German cause as well as polemicist historians rose to establish (and largely rightly) on the basis of revealed documents that, if anything, the Kaiser and Hitler wanted to avoid a war with the United States; that they had not contemplated an attack on America. Immediately the wrong conclusions were drawn therefrom: that it was the evil interests, and propaganda, of the munitions makers that brought us into the war in 1917, that it was the interests and the propaganda of the British and the Jews and the Communists that brought us into the war in 1941.

All of this, of course, is bunk. The argument is conducted on the wrong level. For whether Germany in 1917 or in 1941 wished to attack the United States was irrelevant; what *was* relevant was that this country could not, in her very own interests, tolerate a German victory over Britain. It was inane to make a "crusade" out of all this; and we suffer, today, the onerous consequences of these misconceived "crusades," and at a time when the "crusade" concept is again becoming popular.

HERE it should be remarked that, whatever the merits of the German issue, the crucial step that led directly to Pearl Harbor was the American note on November 26, 1941, a note that laid down a set of conditions to Japan which, though admirably complete and just from the viewpoint of American public opinion, were really unacceptable to the Japanese. It played into the hands of the war party in Tokyo. It delivered the death-blow to those—the Emperor, the aristocracy, the Admiralty—who hoped to avoid armed conflict with the Western Powers. And, judging from the tone of our present diplomacy toward Russia, it is indeed probable that some future historian might objectively reconstruct the story of a horrible Third World War in a manner that would establish America, and not Russia, as the provocator in the ultimate phase; it could establish that at some future date (just as on November 26, 1941) the American demands to Russia would prove to be such that the leaders of Russia, in all sincerity, could not accept. No matter how pernicious the process by which the Japanese had conquered Korea, Manchuria, Eastern China, no matter how horrible the process with which the Russians occupied Eastern Europe, they could hardly be expected to accept our demands for the immediate renunciation of *all* these territories, the conquests of which stretched back into decades.

There is a further ironical twist to these considerations. Again it involves the question of American self-interest. It is evident today, from the opened documents, that the inflexible American note to Tokyo of November 26, 1941, was drafted because a more flexible and reasonable proposal, drafted three days before, was effectively torpedoed, in his own self-interest, by Chiang Kai-Shek and by some of his American friends. Americans are a very gullible people. In 1917-18 a bevy of Eastern European émigrés convinced Wilson that it was the paramount interest of the United States to further the principle of national self-determination

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and to break up the Danubian Monarchy there. That the interests of these Czechs, Lithuanians, Yugoslavs were sincere and patriotic was one thing; but the interest of the United States was another. In 1941-45 there were many refugees among us who helped to establish the Unconditional Surrender principle as the paramount war aim of the United States—another questionable proposition. And there are, today, a host of Eastern European émigrés (already props and supports of certain Congressional committees) whose main hope and interests lie in the outbreak of a war between the United States and Russia—the sooner the better.

In this respect the words of John Quincy Adams, long forgotten, demand consideration. "By enlisting under other banners," he wrote, "were they even the banners of foreign independence, [the Union] would involve herself beyond the power of extrication into all the wars of interest and intrigue, of individual avarice, envy and ambition which assume the colors and usurp the standards of freedom."

"Usurp the standards of freedom . . ." is the basic issue here, as all this points to the greater discrepancy, the main argument of the McCarthy movement: that to fight Malenkov is the highest virtue, while to fight against Hitler was a treasonable mistake. Thus it is logical that the Buckley-Bozell volume, the first summation of the McCarthyite ideology, appeared almost simultaneously with another book greeted by loud huzzahs, the theme of which was to establish that Pearl Harbor, and the subsequent involvement of America in the last war, were the products of ignominious treacheries.

On April 2, 1954, George Sokolsky spoke to the students at La Salle College, in Philadelphia. The worst mistake we ever made was to enter the Second World War, he said. "We goaded Britain into it, when we should have let Hitler unite Western Europe against Communism."

One can hardly escape the conclusion that we are involved here not with advocates of different foreign policies but in the justification of one (Western) kind of totalitarianism at the partial expense of another (Eastern) one. For it is not only the murdered millions of Jews that Mr. Sokolsky overlooks. The issue is very well expressed in the words which the present Pope, then Cardinal Pacelli, addressed to the German Ambassador to the Vatican on April 30, 1937. In answer to a German Note, which complained of previous Papal critiques of National Socialism, as "having dealt a dangerous blow to the defense front against the world menace of Bolshevism," the Papal Note said, among other things:

> At a time when those who are now vociferous opponents of Bolshevism were consciously or unconsciously its pacemakers, the Holy See revealed with unflagging zeal the cultural and social, as well as the religious dangers of that system. Similarly, and up to the present moment, the Holy See has let no opportunity go by to strengthen and expand the spiritual defensive front of the faithful against atheistic Bolshevism. The Holy Father owes it to the dignity and essential impartiality of the Supreme Pontificate, however, while condemning the Bolshevistic system of delusion and revolution, not to close his eyes to errors that are beginning to insinuate themselves into other political and ideological movements and are pressing for supremacy. The fact that such errors are also found with political defensive fronts which have a general anti-Bolshevist orientation cannot constitute a justification for tolerating or ignoring them on the part of the highest authority on religious teaching.

Passing outside the realms of Christian Authority, we will find more examples of what could be construed the main dishonesty of our times and our society, a society which put such a great premium on financial honesty as to forget the virtue of intellectual honesty altogether.

The foreign policy of Churchill has been marked with a degree of modest prescience which, though not at all unusual in other ages, has brought many painful frustrations and mental agonies to its author who, in the long run, has been nevertheless vindicated. Yet nothing, as Harold Nicolson once wrote, is quite so pernicious as the predilection of our age for the attribution of false motives. When, during and after the last war, the Prime Minister wished to warn America against the postwar Soviet dangers, he was roundly denounced as a "reactionary" who wanted America to pull Balkan chestnuts from the fire for Britain. Approximately at the same time the editors of *Life* had seen fit to present a full-page photograph of Lenin in their magazine, with the caption: "This Was Perhaps the Greatest Man of the Twentieth Century." Today the same editors roundly denounce Churchill for his diplomatic approach, and do not cease informing the American people that the Prime Minister is "senile," forgetting that when in December, 1944 Churchill had ordered British troops to fire at the Communist guerrilla forces in Greece, he was ferociously condemned not only by Roosevelt and by Stettinius but by such men as Admiral Leahy, Patrick Hurley, and the majority of American publications, among which *Life* and *Time* figured eminently.

Reminiscing about the Greek Communist insurrection in the last volume of his war memoirs, the Prime Minister wrote these modest words, without the least sense of reproach:

> If the editors of all these well-meaning organs will look back at what they wrote then and compare it with what they think now they will, I am sure, be surprised.

This sentence, in the *Life* printing of the Churchill memoirs, was omitted in its entirety.

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The Hidden Seeds Of Corruption

WE were eating spaghetti one night in a restaurant in the Little Italy section of the Lower East Side of New York. The meal was interrupted by a murder down the block. I shall not soon forget the screams of the women and the terror that hung in the air as we came out of the restaurant and walked toward the body of a man lying in the middle of the street and bleeding from a dozen wounds.

There was an assistant district attorney with us and he began to question the Italians in the crowd that gathered.

"Did you see it?"

"No."

"Did *you* see it?"

"No."

"Did *you* see it?"

"No. I see nothing."

A small boy, untutored in the law of his people, began to talk and an older man quickly put a hand over his mouth. Here was a murder committed in the middle of the street at a crowded intersection, a score of shots fired, and nobody had seen it.

Later I found the same secretiveness, the same distrust of outsiders, among the longshoremen on the New York waterfront. You might think that you knew them well, that you were practically pals, but try to pump them on the details of some mob operation on the docks and they would shut up on you like a bank vault.

I thought of this the other day as I read the results of the second election held by the National Labor Relations Board in the contest between the corrupt old International Longshoremen's Association and the new AFL longshore union. The score: ILA—9,110; AFL—8,791; Challenged—1,797. Since most of the uncounted ballots were challenged by the AFL, the odds are that the ILA is going to win—again. (Counting will take about six weeks.)

The results last December were: ILA—9,060; AFL—7,568; Challenged—4,399. This election was thrown out by the NLRB because of violence and intimidation at the polls and the challenged ballots were never counted.

But this was only one of a score of body blows suffered by the old union. First came the investigation by the N. Y. State Crime Commission in the winter of 1952-53. The muck and corruption ran over the front pages of the nation's newspapers like a black river.

Then the AFL expelled the ILA at its convention last September when the union refused to clean house. New York and New Jersey passed laws, approved by the federal government, which eliminated the worst features of the shape-up, the mobs' favorite hiring method, knocked out the loading racket, and ruled the more infamous criminals off the docks entirely.

Joe Ryan and other longshore union leaders were indicted and tried for such crimes as extortion and plain and fancy theft. (In Joe's case the trial wound up with a hung jury; some of the other were convicted.)

Then last December came the first election and the adverse ruling of the NLRB. The mobs called for a strike. It tied up the docks for four weeks, but when the Labor Board told the ILA leaders they would be ruled off the ballot if they didn't call it off, the men were sent back. Just before the second election the old union was convicted of contempt of court for defying a series of no-strike injunctions and fined $50,000.

When the union's lawyers pleaded that they didn't have the money, the court threw the whole union into receivership. And the report leaked out that several locals of Harry Bridges' West Coast Communist-dominated union were sending money to Tough Tony Anastasia, ILA boss in Brooklyn.

A few days later the men voted again for the old mob, for corruption, murder, chaos, more wildcat strikes, lost wages, thieving leaders, entanglements with Bridges, etc., etc., etc.

Why? It baffles you. It baffles me. The AFL's strategy was not letter-perfect, but it was good enough to win. It should have won.

If it proves anything, it proves that the corruption goes deep, into the men themselves. I know that all the better labor writers have maintained that the men themselves are clean and decent, simply the victims of a pack of jackals who feed upon their unprotected vitals. I always hoped that was true myself. I can't believe it any more.

True, there is the group loyalty, the old waterfront loyalty resenting the intrusion of outsiders. But there is more than that. Too many of the men like to do a little pilfering themselves, hang around the fringes of the mob to pick up whatever crumbs are falling, admire the mob leader as the kind of man they would like to be themselves if they only had the guts and the brains.

You can't say now that the men didn't know better. They were given the facts—by the papers, by radio and

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television, by their own friends. They knew from their own experience what the ILA meant. And still they voted for it. I think they voted for what they wanted.

Why they wanted it I don't know. Blame the system, blame the low state of religion, blame the long infection of the years, blame anything you want.

It can't last. I have too much faith in human nature to believe that. It is already evident that the AFL, in the course of five months, has gained at least 1,233 supporters over the first election. It came within an eyelash of winning. Give it another year and I believe it can win.

But the disease runs deep. That is my point. The problem of corruption will plague the New York docks for a long time to come because it is not just in a few leaders. It is in the men.

THE TIME PAYMENT RACKET

THIEVERY is more common than you think. In states of the union, including the great Commonwealth of Massachusetts, it is still perfectly legal.

For example. The old wooden station wagon was beginning to disintegrate and one day recently as I was riding past a used car lot I saw a 1950 Chevrolet and conceived a lust for it.

My friends had told me, "Don't go to a used car lot. Go to an established car dealer who handles used cars. He'll gyp you too, but at least he has a reputation to protect and he'll gyp you in a quiet, restrained sort of way."

I had done this when I bought the old station wagon. It may seem incredible, but just a few minutes ago I figured out the financing charges on the time payments for the first time and discovered that I paid about 17% interest per annum. And this on a deal with one of the most reputable car dealers in Boston, who in turn dealt with one of the most reputable finance companies in the country.

Well, this time I got a yen for this Chevvie, and I decided to live dangerously. On my first free day I painted, varnished and simonized the old wagon and took it in to do a little trading. I thought I would take all the children along to soften the salesman's heart, but this was a foolish fancy. He had no heart.

My first move was my best. I drove the Chevvie, salesman, kids and all, to a garage man that I trusted and asked him to look it over. He discovered defective brakes, a loose steering mechanism, and a tired tire whose treads had been recut to make it look young and vigorous. The salesman promised to correct all and the garageman gave his *nihil obstat*.

Exhausted by this cautionary display of common sense, I then began to weaken fast. The salesman offered an allowance of $400 for the old station wagon and I let him have it for $500. I should have held out for $600. (Once a reputable car dealer changed his offer of $500 to $700 within a matter of seconds.)

The unpaid balance was $595. Carried away now by lust, I signed a contract to repay the balance in 24 monthly installments of $34.50 each, for total finance charges of $233. This contract was offered by the dealer but was actually with a separate(?) finance company. Only later did I stop and sit down calmly with pencil and paper and figure out that I was being clipped for more than 30% interest per annum on the loan.

Eventually, I got a loan from the bank at 4.5% and paid off the charming little finance company in full, with an extra payment of only $15 for the privilege.

I found out that I was lucky. Timothy Donovan, Massachusetts Commissioner of Banking, informed me that there is no law in this state regulating loans of over $300. (Under $300 the interest rate is pegged at 2% *per month* on the unpaid balance, which still strikes me as usurious.) He told me of one case of a woman who borrowed $1950 from a loan company and signed a note to repay $3250. After making two monthly payments she got a loan from the bank and offered to pay off in full but the loan company insisted on payment of the full $3250.

Commissioner Donovan said that he had seen loans at 900% interest and that 100% was fairly common. He has prepared several bills himself which would limit interest rates to 2% per month on personal loans under $500, 1.5% between $500 and $1,000, and 1% over $1,000. But like all previous usury bills in this state they have so far been bottled up in committee by legislators who are sensitive to the feverish activity of the loan company lobby.

I was surprised to learn that the support of the AFL and CIO for these bills had been only so-so.

It seems to me foolish to fight so hard to get money into the workers' pockets and then allow the loan sharks to sneak it out without a struggle.

Vanity compels me to believe that there must be a fair number of jerks just as gullible as myself. We need protection.

JOHN C. CORT.

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THE STAGE

THE SEA GULL

THE several pleasures of this mounting of the Chekhov drama do not, sadly, make for pleasure, and I must report the dilatory nature of the evening at the Phoenix, its absence—whatever the thrust of well-intentioned energy—of any shaping art. There is, of course, every reason to fail in Chekhov: of all comparable dramatists, he is the most vulnerable to his interpreters, and the history of Chekhov production—the victories small and marginal, the defeats so terribly total—is a melancholy one.

Yet however arduous the task, it richly rewards; and the most disappointing factor of this "Sea Gull" is its limping flight into distinction, its dispiriting inability to suggest the masterpiece of interior life which lies folded beneath its wings. A dully competent translation—flat, quite insensible to tone—blurs the focus of the work, and it is difficult to conceive (since the crisp and elegant versions of Stark Young and Elisaveta Fen are already in existence) what could have dictated so indefensible a choice. But the failure is essentially one of performance and direction.

It is a commonplace that dramatic realization presupposes style, and nowhere are we more conscious of that demand than in a playwright such as Chekhov, who lives by adroit adjustments of tone and tempo, by the play of light and shade. Mr. Norris Houghton's direction of this revival never achieves style, nor even stylishness; everywhere there is a decline in pressure, climaxes are not marked, nor emotional moments given their full weight. And what this laxity of control does permit disastrously is a kind of warring theatrical anarchy, in which several otherwise competent actors, with the very best of intentions, quite literally do the play to death.

Montgomery Clift's style, for example, in portraying the tormented young student, is that of the "serious" contemporary film: full of a morose, nervous sensibility, of sudden, irrelevant growls and grimaces, and staccato naturalistic byplay. But deeply as one may admire Mr. Clift's obvious emotional penetration of the role, one must deplore his want of craft, the narrow, unschooled channels through which that perception must move. Mr. Clift is at that critical juncture in an actor's career when his personality has lost its fresh crust of novelty, and a reputation must again be established on something harder and more durable.

Maureen Stapleton's Masha is an interesting failure, but overstates both the pathos and indirect humor of the role. How admirable an actress Miss Stapleton might be, indeed, would only she cease attempting to invoke the grand style, when all her success lies with the hard, cool, grey effect. Much the same may be said for Kevin McCarthy, but he is an actor conscious of his present limitations and his Trigorin, while lacking in resonance and maturity, has a physical presence and sobriety not displeasing. But what is one to make of such coarsely played minor roles, and of an excessively Slavic Nina, whose contact with the soul of Russia may have been secure, but whose connection with her audience was fragile, and with the English language almost non-existent? Alone, Sam Jaffe, George Vosvokec and Will Geer strike a dryly acceptable Chekhov note, and only one performance, Judith Evelyn's Madame Arkadina, has the precision, sustained dramatic line and freedom from temperament of serious art.

I am distressed, reviewing my notices of the Phoenix season, to find how extensive has been my apathy to their work: "The Golden Apple" alone placed me among the yea-sayers. Yet what, precisely, is to be one's attitude to a theater which follows so erratic a course: gives indifferent—possibly bad—performances of such great plays as "Coriolanus" and "The Sea Gull," and good performances of indifferent—possibly bad—plays such as "Madam, Will You Walk." It is ironic that the Phoenix, which has posited its very existence on a rejection of Broadway values, should have so frequently displayed them this year: in its concentration on stellar players, its disregard for the stylistic delicacies of ensemble acting, and a want of that serious, fine concern with dramatic experience which justifies theater as an art. One must wish the Phoenix well as it enters a second season, but until its sponsors show themselves as responsible, selective and discriminating as they are ambitious, they cannot claim the moral prestige an indulgent press and public have so generously accorded them. (*At the Phoenix.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

THEM ARE ANTS

WHAT helps most to make "Them!", a new science-fiction thriller, believable, in spite of its fantastic plot, is Gordon Douglas' direction, which follows a technique that is a cross between the old March-of-Time semi-documentary style and television's overly polite and underplayed "Dragnet." "Them!" moves forward with suspense, from the opening scene in which a little girl is seen wandering around in the New Mexico desert in a state of shock, through the succeeding scenes in which there are evidences of violent death, through the explanations about the giant ants that are on the rampage, and right up to the finale when the only remaining queen ants are tracked down

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to their nest in Los Angeles' underground drainage system.

James Whitmore, Edmund Gwenn, Joan Weldon, James Arness and the many others in the large cast portray their roles in a straightforward, factual manner without a touch of hokum to detract from the seriousness of the affair. With the help of a few side lectures on insect pathology (and even these manage to be handled in good movie technique), "Them!" offers plausible explanations—foremost among which is that lingering radiation from the first atom bomb test had much to do with producing these giant ants. Although entomologist Edmund Gwenn assures us at the end of this thrill-packed film that we are now safe from these monsters, he also succeeds in sending us away with some somber food for thought (and material for future films): "When man entered the atomic age, he opened the door to a new era—and what he will find no one knows."

IN "Johnny Guitar," Joan Crawford plays a self-righteous saloon owner in the wild west, but her beautiful slacks and costumes are much more appropriate to a Noel Coward rough-and-tumble satire. In a complicated screenplay written by Philip Yordan, Miss Crawford, aided by guitar-playing Sterling Hayden, is against the world, which includes Scott Brady, Mercedes McCambridge, Ward Bond and sometimes Hayden himself.

Actually the story and impressive cast could have made an interesting outdoor movie; but Director Nicholas Ray seemingly refused to take the script or his actors seriously. He just couldn't have planned the theatrical entrances and poses Crawford assumes, the ham manner in which McCambridge shrieks her lines or the indifference of the various men involved.

A HOLLYWOOD movie that could have had the feel of a documentary because of its beautifully photographed shots of Peru and that country's natives high up in the Andes is "Secret of the Incas." But the film makers in this case were straining so hard to come up with another "Maltese Falcon" or "Treasure of the Sierra Madre" that they muddied up the assets of the locale with an involved plot and a lot of people. The story is mainly concerned with the efforts of two scoundrels, played by Charlton Heston and Thomas Mitchell, to obtain an old Inca sunburst described by these two greedy men as a hunk of gold with 119 diamonds and many other jewels.

Maybe so far so good, but when the double-dealing of these two gets further complicated by a Roumanian refugee (Nicole Maurey), her pursuer, various tourists, archeologists (led by Robert Young) and a flock of Incan descendants who have their own ideas about what should be done with the sunburst, the plot gets out of hand. An added attraction there in the Technicolor Andes is Yma Sumac covering a range in her singing that will startle you right out of your lethargy.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"POETS AND MYSTICS"

Torquay, Devonshire, England

TO the Editors: The many gracious and more than appreciative words said about my work by the reviewer of my *Poets and Mystics* [May 7] make it seem almost ungrateful to reply to his adverse comments. Nevertheless in fairness to myself I must deal with some of the points he has raised.

Though the view I take of Shakespeare's drama supports my understanding of the nature of poetry, it did not owe its origin to it. It was suggested by an article in the *Observer* in which two doggerel lines from the conclusion of Richard II were condemned with the usual comment that they must be the work of another hand. As the title of my chapter points out, I have but endorsed the verdict of Shakespeare's personal friend and fellow dramatist Ben Jonson. His judgment at any rate cannot be dismissed as the result of a mystical theory of poetry. I did not base my "conjectural biography" of Shakespeare on "conjecture a generation or more out of date." I derived my information—for I did not and do not make any claim to first-hand research—from the Life prefixed to an edition of the Shakespeare Head Press omnibus published as recently as 1947, hardly "a generation or more out of date."

As regards tragedy, I agree that the realities known to faith are not for most believers as real as the realities on the natural plane, though I must add the latter are objectively less real than the former. Therefore, as I said in my essay, we can enter into the tragic conflict, appreciate tragedy and profit by it. But the saints canonized and uncanonized for whom the things of God are experienced as they are, as more real than this lower world, would not, could not enter into the tragic conflict. *Sub specie aeternitatis* it becomes insignificant. The Incarnation in this connection is irrelevant. For Christ no longer belongs to this world of tragic conflicts. He is in the heavenly places where we also are urged to dwell in spirit (Collect for Ascension Day). In so far as by correspondence with grace we are enabled to accept that invitation and "fix our hearts where true joys have their home," we are raised above the tragic conflict, could not compose tragedy, if otherwise able to do so, cannot appreciate tragedy as such, though any poetry a particular tragedy may possess could still be enjoyed.

E. I. WATKIN.

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The Moral Algebra of a Strange Talent

MARTIN TURNELL

IT is a strange thing that though international celebrity comes easily to some writers, other writers of outstanding merit seem destined for home consumption only. This depends to some extent on differences of national psychology and on the vagaries of taste, but it also depends on imponderable factors which are not readily explained.

Gide has never been an idol or a scapegoat in Anglo-Saxon countries as he was on the continent, and he has achieved little more than a grudging acceptance. It needed the change in the spiritual climate created by the second world war to turn Mauriac from the neglected author of the thirties into the bestseller of the forties. Although he has been writing for over thirty years and has some sixty books to his name, Marcel Jouhandeau is still comparatively unknown in the English-speaking world. It was not until last year that a selection from his most successful works of fiction was translated and published in the United States under the title of *Marcel and Elise,* and the book has not yet found a London publisher.

Jouhandeau's origins are of considerable importance for an appreciation of his work. He was born at Guéret, a small town lying about forty miles northeast of Limoges, on July 26, 1888, and was the son of a butcher and of the daughter of a local baker. He spent his first nineteen years in his native town before being sent to the Lycée Henri IV in Paris. His father wished him to continue his studies in order to prepare for an academic career, but Jouhandeau felt that it would be incompatible with his vocation as a writer. In 1912 he found himself deprived of his allowance and took a post as a teacher in a Catholic primary school at Passy where, except for four years as an army clerk at Guéret during the First World War, he remained until 1949.

His literary career began with the publication of *Les Pincengrain* in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* for October 1920. *La Jeunesse de Théophile,* an autobiographical novel describing his boyhood at Guéret, followed in 1921 and *Monsieur Godeau intime,* the most difficult and in some ways the most ambitious of his works, in 1926. A year or two earlier he had been introduced by Marie Laurencin, the artist, to a dancer who was known professionally as Caryathis and who was to become famous in his books as Elise. They were married in 1929. Four years later he published *Monsieur Godeau marié,* the first of the series of novels describing the married life of Monsieur Godeau and Elise.

The early years at Guéret—the "Chaminadour" of the novels—not only provided Jouhandeau with the raw material of many of his books; their psychological influence on the man and the writer was decisive. For there is in the man and the writer an extraordinary combination of naiveté and primitive shrewdness which belongs to a peasant community. Although he can scarcely put pen to paper without setting family, friends, the ecclesiastical authorities and even the reading public by the ears, he himself seems unable to grasp how provocative he is or why there should nearly always be an uproar.

In a volume dedicated to the memory of his parents it appeared quite natural to him to describe the amorous exploits of his father with the shepherdesses and shopgirls of the Limousin, and he was surprised to find that his literary activities were not considered a source of pride by the family and that the natives of Guéret, who had already begun to murmur at the time of his first book, were frankly hostile. When last year the *Osservatore Romano* delivered a frontal attack on him, he was deeply distressed and genuinely convinced that the attack had been prompted by a book in which he had exposed the economic plight of the underpaid teachers in Catholic schools. It did not occur to him that *Eloge de la volupté,* a work which has certain affinities with Gide's *Corydon,* was not exactly the sort of thing that is expected of a writer who is continually proclaiming himself a Catholic and might have had something to do with the scandal.

JOUHANDEAU, like Gide, is a very versatile writer. His published work includes novels, stories, autobiography, sketches of the local people of Guéret as well as religious and semi-philosophical writings. Each of them reveals a facet of the same person and adds something to what writers like to call their "position." It is with Jouhandeau's position that I am particularly concerned here.

"I am a Catholic," he wrote in *De la Grandeur,* "but my religion belongs only to myself." This sentence points to one great difference between the religious writers of the past and present which I mentioned in an earlier article in The Commonweal, but which is of sufficient importance to be repeated here.

Mr. Turnell has written widely on French literary figures. He is the author of "Baudelaire" and "The Novel in France."

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In medieval times religion was not a special department of life or Christian writing necessarily a special department of writing. There was continuity between what might in the widest sense be called religious experience and everyday experience. Religion provided the writer with a universal system and extended instead of narrowing his field. From the seventeenth century onwards the position is gradually reversed. Instead of religion imposing its pattern on the writer, it is the writer who imposes a personal pattern on religion.

Very few contemporary writers, whether Catholic or Protestant, can escape the charge of using their books to propagate a private religion. Gide used an emotional attachment to Protestantism to maintain an artificial tension between religion and a new paganism. Mauriac has never sought to turn black into white as Gide did, but there is an unmistakable element of complicity in his novels. The guilt-ridden writers of the nineteenth century looked longingly back to the "lost paradise" of childhood which was the great symbol of innocence. The twentieth-century writer is not much interested in innocence, or rather he is only interested in the loss of innocence. He is most at home in what Mauriac calls "the Catholic universe of evil," and his characters provide a vicarious satisfaction by committing those sins which we dare not commit and which are made to seem cheap at the price of a tardy and pallid repentance.

Jouhandeau looks at first like a Catholic counterpart of Gide, but he is more difficult to classify than either Gide or Mauriac. There is a powerful vein of dialectic running through his work and though his interest in evil sometimes recalls the Satanism of an earlier generation, his approach is more serious, more mature and possibly more subversive than that of the nineteenth century. He has called on of his books *Algèbre des valeurs morales,* and the title conveys very well the moral ambiguity which permeates much that he has written.

"I was brought up as a Catholic," he says in *De la Grandeur,* "but I do not practice my religion because I live habitually in a state of sin. To live in sin, however, does not imply that one lives outside the Faith: without the Faith there would be no sin." He recognizes the difference between Good and Evil as clearly as Mauriac, but what is proposed in many of his books is in fact a "moral algebra"—a series of variations or compromises which are worked out not so much in relation as in opposition to the Christian ethic.

Some of the best examples of "moral algebra" are to be found in *Monsieur Godeau intime.* The dialectical virtuosity of the book inevitably recalls Valéry's *Monsieur Teste.* For the Godeau of this book is a moral 'monster' who bears a marked resemblance to Valéry's metaphysical monster:

> Evil could just as well be a good for M. Godeau as Good, provided that M. Godeau did not subject himself absolutely to either of them, but subjected both of them equally to himself by remaining the same distance from both of them.
>
> He had only separated from Good and Evil, which were now simply relative to him, the Absolute which was identified with him. M. Godeau was absolutely M. Godeau, was an absolute M. Godeau. The Absolute was M. Godeau. The Absolute, sitting between God and Satan, smiled in M. Godeau who was no longer anything but an *honnête homme.*

The *Essai sur moi-même* contains a remarkable commentary on the position:

> Théophile [the protagonist of *La Jeunesse de Théophile*] perceives his existence within the limits of grace and orthodoxy. The heresy on which M. Godeau verges, however, is so instructive that it might be described as fortunate. Such supernatural pride is a witness to the supreme dignity of our nature. . . . If I refuse myself eternally to God and God loves me eternally, it is no longer God who condemns, damns and tortures me, but I who condemn, damn and torture God. It is God who is in hell.

What has happened is that in M. Godeau Christianity has produced what his creator calls "a new Prometheus who is incomparably more formidable than the pagan one," and who precisely because he is a Christian is able to set himself up as a challenge not merely to the Devil but to God.

ALTHOUGH Jouhandeau is said to have reservations about them, there is no doubt that the books which have most impressed his readers and his critics are the series describing the married life of M. Godeau and Elise. A novelist naturally puts something of himself and his friends into his books, but the autobiographical element is more pronounced in some writers than in others. Jouhandeau has never attempted to minimize its importance in his own writings. He has, indeed, declared that Théophile, Juste and Godeau are all portraits of himself seen at different times and from different angles, but he makes the essential distinction when he goes on to describe Godeau as: "This legendary, this fabulous figure, this fantastic and simple symbol, my henchman, my double and my Demon."

M. Godeau and his creator certainly have many things in common, but in the process of writing the novelist's material is transformed. His "double" becomes the "legendary," the "fabulous" the "fantastic" figure of M. Godeau. Jouhandeau may disclaim any gift of imagination, but M. Godeau and Elise appear in his work as two of the most formidable creations in contemporary literature, and the exchanges between them furnish us with fresh and disturbing insights into the human couple in marriage.

"If Monsieur Pincengrain and Sister Ephrem had married," we are told of the anti-clerical mayor and the

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nun in *Les Pincengrain,* "they would have spent one half of their lives making love and the other half hating one another." This sentence might serve as an epigraph for the account of the married life of M. Godeau and Elise. It possesses the same mixture of naiveté and shrewdness as the other works, but the two principal characters have a long ancestry. They are the masterful domineering wife and the cunning henpecked husband whom we meet in early comedy, who reappear in Molière and who even today are popular figures in music halls. A good deal of the primitive remains in M. Godeau and Elise, but they have become the vehicles of a highly complex experience. Basically, it is the story of a man who without ceasing to be a homosexual falls violently in love with a woman. What he repeatedly calls his 'vice' intensifies though it does not alone create the love-hate conflict which would inevitably have arisen between such a pair. The story is related by M. Godeau in the first person, and is a mixture of narrative, dramatic scenes and commentary. The extraordinary 'punch' of the work is most in evidence in the commentary:

> We have to put up with one another's sensuality and one another's repulsion at the wrong moment. Marriage is therefore the perfect form of discord. It represents a strange compromise with promiscuity, and the nuptial bed becomes the worst of stews if pleasure is given and taken to order.
>
> When people are tied to one another, they hate each other from the duty or the illusion of loving one another, unless they have to love not for the pleasure, but for the suffering they inflict and receive.
>
> "Why did you get married?"
> "Presumably because I didn't want people to be able to say that I hadn't abused all the Sacraments."
>
> I am deprived of my privacy at night and submit to the promiscuity of this woman whose massiveness weighs on each of my thoughts and distorts it. Everything is alien and odious to me here, especially the atmosphere of luxuriousness. When I wake in the room which was once mine, I feel sick of soul.

Jouhandeau is master of a considerable range of mood. The books contain many scenes of superb comedy, particularly the account of Elise's activities as a housewife and her conversion. These in turn serve to throw into relief the somber moments when tragedy threatens. This is the close of *Chronique d'une passion*:

> I saw myself once for all in this world as I shall be in the other, as I am absolutely and finally. I was able to contemplate myself in my Place, unique, judged, in the place which is reserved for me and in the sovereign attitude which is destined for me for ever at the antipodes of God—I saw myself in Hell.

The books do not form a tightly constructed whole like the mammoth novels of Jules Romains and Roger Martin du Gard. Jouhandeau has not attempted to impose an artificial unity on experience, but has allowed experience to determine the form of the work. For what is most distinctive about it is the personal rhythm, is the continual oscillation between extremes, between Good and Evil, "greatness" and "abjection," love and hate.

There is also a debit side to the account. A novel written in the form of a "chronicle" is bound to have *longueurs* and to descend at times to a trivial catalogue of everyday incidents. It is for this reason that the American volume, in which selections from the different books have been arranged in the form of a continuous narrative approved by the author, possesses a power which is to some extent dissipated in the long sequence which runs from *Monsieur Godeau marié* to *Elise architecte* and which is still incomplete. It is to be hoped that when he has finally exhausted the possibilities of his theme, the author will one day distil the essence into a single stout volume which might prove a durable and a lasting monument to one of the strangest talents of the century.

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By FREDERICK D. WILHELMSEN

TO explore these *Medieval Essays* by Christopher Dawson is to be struck again, both by the learning of the man, and by the full vision of the patrimony of Christian culture. The present volume, an extension of his earlier *Medieval Religion,* confirms Dawson in his place as the foremost medievalist in the English speaking world. Throughout his life, Dawson has been blessed with a rare gift of synthesis and has had the good sense to avoid the aridity of academic specialization. This union of genius and catholic scholarship has put us all in his debt, a debt increased in no small measure by this collection of studies.

His recent work has shown an increasing concern for what he has called "the future of Christian culture," and his introductory essay poses the question that is perhaps the foremost issue facing thinking Catholics today: should we immerse ourselves in the study of a Christian culture that is ceasing to be an operative tradition in a world increasingly more secularist in thought and action? Since the Faith *is not* the civilization the Church created from out of the dust and chaos of the first centuries of the Christian era by fusing into a brief but brilliant unity the barbarian vigor of the North and the classical heritage of the Mediterranean world, does it not thereby follow that this cultural order, rejected as it is by the modern world, is so much irrelevant baggage to the Christian minority attempting to make the Incarnation effective in our time? Dawson faces this problem squarely, and, so far as I can determine, he answers it in three ways.

Initially he points up the grim truth that the secularized mind must be hostile to any attempt, not only to infuse the spirit of Christian culture into the age, but even to make that culture the hub of the wheel of education. Nonetheless our contemporary civilization grew out of the Christian heritage of the past, and even though this past be rejected, the age has been formed in large part by it, and therefore cannot be comprehended for what it is except in the light of its Christian antecedents. Secondly, "the old order of Western Christendom has passed away, but the tradition of Christian culture is inseparable from the tradition of Christian life and of the Christian faith": stamped by over fifteen centuries full of the world's greatest effort to make the spirit incarnate in history, the present day Christian who understands and takes pride in his inheritance has at hand the only concrete instrument capable of healing the wounds of the time. "If the semi-barbarous society of feudal Europe could create such a remarkable cultural unity under the influence of Christian ideas, what might the modern world achieve with its vast resources of knowledge and power which are running to waste or being perverted into instruments of social destruction?" Thirdly, Dawson makes it abundantly clear, not through theorizing, but by penetrating the history of medieval and early Western and Eastern Christianity, that Catholicism is not a neutral cultural force, not an anti-historical Gospel of the Barthian brand of neo-orthodoxy, but rather contains within itself a spiritual vigor that must spill out into the marketplace and fuse society into a unity stamped with the mark of Faith and penetrated with the spirit of charity. If Romano Guardini is correct (cf. *Das Ende der Neuzeit*) in his opinion that the Faith is retreating out of history and is being concentrated in the inner depths of the human soul, so that today personality has been killed, but the person himself, no matter how thoroughly regimented he might be, remains secretly free and open to the hidden influx of divine grace—should this diagnosis be true, the conclusions of Dawson would indicate that this is by no means desirable, and quite possibly is only a temporary phase in the history of Christianity.

This last is borne out in the essay devoted to the fall of the Roman Empire. "The high level of material culture" and the "admirable development of public spirit on the part of the citizen class" were given over to secular ends, eventually to ends hedonistic and grossly selfish. Giving their political loyalty to the Empire, the early Christians remained irreconcilably hostile to what Dawson calls the "imperial culture." Therefore an essential ambiguity marked the Christian attitude toward the secular civilization within which they found themselves. A cultural dualism—one pagan and official, the other Christian and private—ran through the early centuries until Christianity grew strong enough to penetrate the public structure of the Empire when its days were already numbered. Dawson makes it clear that the initiative for the public recognition of the Catholic *cultus* came from the imperial authorities, not from the Christians. "It may even be argued that the dualism of religion and culture that existed under the Roman Empire, and more or less generally in modern times, is the normal condition of Christianity. Nevertheless, the other alternative, that of a co-operation and collaboration between religion and culture, is undoubtedly a more ideal system, and from this point of view the medieval achievement remains unsurpassed by any other age."

As the Catholic synthesis began to fade away in the fourteenth century, with Europe ravaged by the Black Death and the Great Schism, the Hundred Years War, and the new nationalism, Dawson seizes upon William Langland as the very type of that native Catholic England soon to go under the forces even then gathering for the work of destruction: the rising capitalism, the first stirrings of industrialism, the decline of chivalry and the growth of the power of money.

This last essay is the finest piece of writing in the book. The near

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beggar in minor orders, loving the old ways and calling down God's vengeance on the new, haunting the inns of London, eating and drinking when he could, sleeping here and there like a common thief, wandering through the countryside, searching forever for Piers Plowman, the apocalyptic vision of Christ's Poor, "Truth's pilgrim at the plough for poor men's sake"—*he* is the symbol and archetype of the medieval dream, and he seems to sum up within himself the essence of that medieval mind cradled in the fires of the Faith: intensely realistic but still full of the passion for perfection, sardonic, careless of everything save honor, longing for roots but open to adventure. Dawson did well conclude with Langland's desperate cry for the cause of Catholic unity: in a sense Dawson has made it his own:

> . . . come with me ye fools,
> Into Unity of Holy Church. and hold we us there,
> And cry we to Nature. to come and defend
> Us Fools from the fiend. for the love for Piers Plowman,
> And call we to all the commons. that they come into Unity,
> And there abide and do battle. against Belial's children.

The Constant

JOURNEY WITHOUT END. By Manes Sperber. Doubleday. $3.75.

By MICHAEL HARRINGTON

JOURNEY Without End is an important book. It is the last volume of a trilogy which includes *The Burned Bramble* and *The Abyss*. In it, Manes Sperber recaptures the fictional power which he demonstrated in *The Burned Bramble* while exploring more deeply the political consciousness which was so brilliant in both of the earlier novels. As a result, I think it fair to say that his trilogy will survive as one of the most important expressions of the spiritual experience of modern Europe, and especially, of its revolutionaries.

Journey Without End follows Doino Faber from the small French village where he had taken refuge, through the fighting in Yugoslavia with the Djoura Brigade (which is, impossibly, anti-fascist and anti-Stalinist), and records the death of a Jewish town in Poland and the close of World War II. As the novel ends, Faber is indeed on a journey without end, for his despair over the growing might of totalitarianism, Stalinism rising out of the defeat of fascism, is not resolved. But on the last page of the novel there stands a peasant, leaning on a burned-out tank, and the evening spreading over the valley "in a silent gesture of boundless gentleness." If there is any resolution for Sperber, though it be denied his hero, it is here.

One is almost inevitably reminded of another ex-Communist and novelist, one who shares with Sperber a genuine fictional talent and a real compassion, Ignazio Silone. And as in a novel like *The Seed Beneath the Snow*, the abiding figure, for Sperber the only one in whom an act of faith is still possible, is the peasant.

There would be an irony in this if the feelings involved were not so serious. The Communist movement to which Sperber and Silone both belonged had long called peasant life "rural idiocy." It was the working class which because of the peculiar nature of its existence — the communalization of the shop, the necessity for organization—was *the* class of society. And now in Sperber this attitude, if not reversed, is changed substantially.

It is the peasant who stands as the symbol, not the worker. Why? Because, I think, other elements in the frame of reference have changed. In the days of boundless hope, when the final conflict was to be tomorrow if not today, the triumph of an industrial society was to be achieved by the collective organization of the one class in society which had no vested interest, the working class. But the terrible history of the last thirty years, of the victories of fascism and the terrible betrayal of Stalinism, above all, years of the *l'univers concentrationaire* in Europe, has changed that. Different questions became more important: that of death, that of God.

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And if the worker could mythically stand as the incarnation of collective vigor, the peasant can stand for the primordial and ceaseless struggle, for the rhythmic recurrence of birth, copulation and death. And in saying that the peasant is central to Sperber (or to Silone), we are saying that the individual and the meta-historic has become more important.

One *could* say that this has happened after every defeat: that romanticism is the art of the reaction, and that the peasant, the good earth, is the deus ex machina of all romanticism. But this is not true of Sperber (nor of Silone). Doino Faber at the end of this trilogy is still fighting against injustice; this is not the novel of a retreat. But rather, he is fighting within a new dimension, one which is conscious of the peasant, and of the Jew, even of the decayed bourgeoisie—and also of God.

This quality of the deeping of conviction and not of its abandonment is the one which, to me, guarantees the sincerity and increases the worth of a novelist like Sperber. The difference between this and the way Koestler, for instance, treated a similar subject in *Arrival and Departure*—by invoking a new anti-dialectic dialectic, by ultimately remaining impervious to the substance of the experience while making the necessary accidental political changes—is the difference between the journalistic novel and the novel of real value.

For though one is forced to concentrate on the political experience of modern Europe when discussing *Journey Without End,* this is no *roman a clef*. It is a political novel, to be sure, but it is the culmination of an artistic and spiritual progress which was evident in *The Burned Bramble* and *The Abyss*.

There have been only a handful who have made something lasting of the terrible European experience of the last decade. Silone and, in the novel, but on another level, the late and great Victor Serge in *The Case of Comrade Tulayev*. In the essay there have been Camus and Orwell. And certainly one would have to include Malraux although since before World War II the line of his writing about this experience has been broken.

But most certainly, one must include Manes Sperber. On all levels —political, aesthetic, philosophical —his is an accomplishment. Perhaps there is one more novel to come — probably not even about Doino Faber, for that would be wrong—in which the process will become complete. As it is, *Journey Without End* is a real, perhaps even a lasting, achievement.

The Hunter Home

STRANGER COME HOME. By William L. Shirer. Little, Brown. $3.95.

By WILLIAM PFAFF

WILLIAM L. Shirer, CBS foreign correspondent, came home to America at the end of the war to broadcast news analyses from New York. His former boss in Europe, Edward R. Murrow, had become vice-president in charge of

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news and public affairs for the network. A controversy developed over the amount of personal opinion to be included in the broadcasts which led to Shirer's resignation. He now has a farm in Connecticut.

Now we have this novel about Raymond Whitehead, a foreign correspondent, who comes home to America after the war to broadcast news analyses for the Federal Broadcasting Company. His former boss in Europe has become a vice-president of the network, and has abandoned his principles, succumbing to the lure of gold. Whitehead gets involved in a controversy with an anti-Communist Senate investigator named O'Brien, two ex-Communists now associated with a radio blacklist publication, and is dropped by "FBC," investigated by O'Brien, perjurously denounced as a Communist by the female of the ex-Communist pair (Whitehead's former lover; Hell hath no fury, etc.) and eventually retreats to a farm in Connecticut. "Farming and writing —that will be a life!" he exclaims.

Mr. Shirer states that his characters are imaginary; any resemblance to persons living or lately dead is purely coincidental. As the summary above would indicate, Mr. Shirer has either a grievously limited imagination or an extraordinary predilection for coincidence. Practically the only character in this novel who does not have an obvious counterpart in public life is a telephone operator on page 134.

If a reader lives in that place where Ray Jenkins came from and has no opinions on McCarthyism, Shirer, loyalty oaths, Congressional investigations, the internal security problem, or the issue of controversy on the networks, he will find this a shallow, abysmally written novel which possesses the virtues of pace and action—a sort of Western set in Manhattan and Washington with Senator O'Brien as the cattle-baron who menaces all honest homesteaders.

If a reader does not live in a political vacuum, he will read this book as a passionately-written, sincere polemical work. But as polemics, it seems to this reviewer gravely at fault. The public parallels to

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Shirer's characters are so plain that his disclaimer is absurd. But the public figures can be no more than parallels—that is to say they are people with their own inscrutable motives and private lives, and are not the paper figures of this book. In the novel it is simple to make O'Brien vicious and wholly corrupt, the ex-Communists vindictive liars, the public power commissioner (who gets involved for no good reason) and the radio executive turncoats, and the heroes smug and virtuous. But when the reader cannot help but supply his own names from the newspapers, is Mr. Shirer being altogether fair? It seems to this writer that if Mr. Shirer wishes to write political essays, it would be more honorable for him to name names.

Men of Letters

THE HEART IN THE DESERT. By Gilbert Phelps. John Day. $3.75.

By DAVID I. SEGAL

MR. Phelps' first novel is cast as a biography of a popular novelist. Since the biography is written by a literary critic who grew up with the novelist, it is really the story of the tension between these two men. In a broad sense, the tension between a man who accepts life, absorbs it and uses it to create works of art, and a man who tries to stand outside of passion and action. This sort of structure depends for success on achieving a balance of reality between the antagonistic points of view. It is in its failure to create this balance that *The Heart in the Desert*, despite its peripheral excellencies, falls short. The critic who narrates the story has, until the last few pages of the book, no insight at all into either his own behavior or that of the novelist whose story this purports to be. Every incident described is used to justify himself and destroy the reputation of the novelist. His wrongheadedness begins by being amusing, and rather touching, but before long becomes merely tedious. By the time the book is half over the worst has happened: the reader no longer cares.

The novelist is complex and credible. Growing up in a small English town at the beginning of the century he is a product of the struggle between the settled old tradespeople and the new, success-driven industrial epoch. He spends most of his short life running from his need to be an artist, trying to wrest security from a world with no security to give. He is blasted out of his comfortable niche in civil service by the insanity and suicide of his wife. He finds himself as a man and artist by marrying a woman who had been wooed by both him and the critic, in their youth. The reaction of the two men to this girl reveals their differing attitudes toward life. She is a kind of free spirit, seeking out danger, relishing life. The critic loves her and tries to transform her into a safe, bland person. The novelist loves her and allows her to find her own way. The novelist becomes successful, and he and his wife drift away from the envy and spleen of the critic, until some years later, they meet again. This meeting results in a melodramatic and cleverly ambiguous conclusion.

The prose that Mr. Phelps has adopted for his critic is, at times, almost a parody of the leaden prose of the little magazines. He has hit on a marvelously adroit device for keeping his story in focus: he has the critic include patches from his subject's novels which deal with the same material as the biography. Most of these are charmingly written. Their grace and understanding act as an ironic counterpoise to the fulmination of the critic. In fact, they make one wish that Mr. Phelps had chosen to tell the story of the critic through the eyes of the novelist.

REVIEWERS

Frederick D. Wilhelmsen is the author of *Hilaire Belloc: No Alienated Man*. He teaches at Santa Clara University.

Michael Harrington has contributed many articles and reviews to The Commonweal in the past few years.

David I. Segal is a new contributor.

Personal

On May 26, at the ninety-sixth Commencement of St. Benedict's College (Atchison, Kansas) the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters was presented to Edward S. Skillin, editor-in-chief of The Commonweal.

Father Bernard Sause, O.S.B., Dean of the School of Theology, presented Mr. Skillin to the Rt. Rev. Cuthbert McDonald, Abbot-President of the Benedictine college. In the course of his remarks, Father Sause said:

"In their encyclical letters the Popes of the last three generations have endeavored, at least with regard to certain major issues, to chart the course we are to follow. But these solemn pronouncements, for the most part, are extremely broad and, even in the most capable translation, little accommodated to the reading habits of our people. Certainly one of the most pressing needs of the Church in this country is that of qualified students of the complicated problem of integrating our Catholic heritage into today's American life, on a scholarly and dignified level—without becoming forbidding or embarrassing because of extreme and unwarranted presentation.

"(Mr. Skillin's) name was chosen by the faculty from a long list of eminent lay leaders in the United States. . . .

"For the past sixteen years Mr. Skillin has edited The Commonweal. That may sound simple. In reality, it must be a frightening undertaking. It calls for rare breadth of vision, zeal, courage and prudence to direct a policy broad enough to admit the wealth of material that the magazine has carried, while keeping the content scrupulously orthodox, and still speaking to the modern mind, which at times can be very sophisticated.

"That has been Mr. Skillin's contribution to the spiritual life of this country. . . ."

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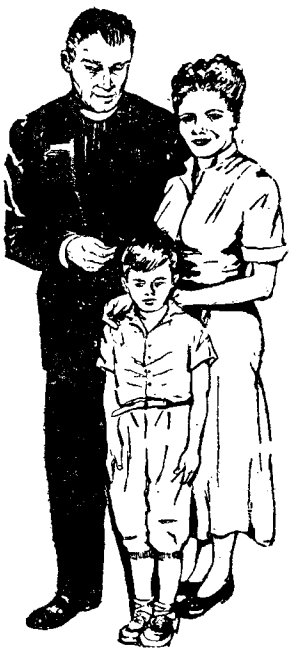
MICHAEL McLAVERTY



who, says Orville Prescott: "possesses all the typically Irish literary virtues . . . and a peculiarly Irish way of writing English with a tang and a lilt to it and a sure mastery of the technique of fiction." Mr. McLaverty is indeed a writer of distinction. *Story*, *The Sign* and *Catholic World* have featured his short stories. His novels, *In This Thy Day*, *The Three Brothers* and *Truth in the Night* gained him wide acclaim. Part-time schoolmaster and writer, Mr. McLavery brings deep personal feeling to this work of matchless appeal.

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